

***Listing of All Claims Including Current Amendments***

1. (Currently Amended) An endoscopic medical instrument, comprising:  
an instrument shaft;  
a tool positioned on a distal end of the instrument shaft;  
a handle; and  
a coupling element securing the handle on the instrument shaft so that the handle can be moved by at least three degrees of freedom with respect to the instrument shaft, wherein one of the degrees of freedom is a translation movement in the direction of a longitudinal axis of the instrument shaft.
2. (Previously Presented) A medical instrument as in claim 1, wherein the coupling element is configured as a component that at least partially surrounds the instrument shaft and can be clamped together with the instrument shaft.
3. (Previously presented) A medical instrument as in claim 1, wherein a distal end of the handle is configured as a tensioning device to receive the coupling element.
4. (Previously Presented) A medical instrument as in claim 3, wherein a pressure force can be exerted on the coupling element by the tensioning device in such a way that the coupling element at least partially surrounds the instrument shaft while clamping said instrument shaft.
5. (Previously Presented) A medical instrument as in claim 4, wherein the coupling element is configured as an essentially spherical component equipped with a penetration bore hole for the instrument shaft and the tensioning device of the handle is configured as a bearing for rotatable storage of the coupling element.

6. (Previously Presented) A medical instrument as in claim 5, wherein the coupling element configured as a spherical component has, at least one side, an aperture running from the outer perimeter to the penetration bore hole and configured in the axial direction of the instrument shaft.
7. (Previously Presented) A medical instrument as in claim 5, wherein the spherical coupling element consists of at least two spherical segments divided in the axial direction of the instrument shaft.
8. (Previously presented) A medical instrument as in claim 7, wherein the coupling element consists of a compressible material including a rubber or plastic material.
9. (Previously presented) A medical instrument as in claim 7, wherein the coupling element consists of a non-compressible material including a hard synthetic or metallic material.
10. (Previously Presented) A medical instrument as claim 9, wherein the handle has two handgrips on the proximal side, so that at least one handgrip is positioned so that it can pivot around a swivel axis with respect to the other handgrip.
11. (Previously Presented) A medical instrument as in claim 10, wherein the handle can be stopped in a closed position, in which the coupling element is clamped together with the instrument shaft.
12. (Previously Presented) A medical instrument as in claim 11, wherein a stopping device is positioned on the handle to stop the handle in the closed position.
13. (Previously Presented) A medical instrument as in claim 12, wherein the stopping device is configured as a screw thread in the area of the tensioning device.

14. (Previously presented) A medical instrument as in claim 12, wherein the stopping device is an eccentric stopping device mounted in the area of the tensioning device.

15. (Previously presented) A medical instrument as in claim 5, wherein rotation of the coupling element can be restricted in the tensioning device by means of a lock pin.

16. (Previously presented) A medical instrument as in claim 15, wherein the tool can be activated by a handgrip of the handle and the handle and the tool are connected to one another by at least one power transmission device.

17. (Previously Presented) A medical instrument as in claim 16, wherein the at least one power transmission device is configured as a flexible power transmission element, in particular as a Bowden cable.

18. (Previously Presented) A medical instrument as in claim 16, wherein the at least one power transmission device is hydraulically powered.

19 – 22. (Cancelled)

23. (New) An endoscopic medical instrument, comprising:

- an instrument shaft;

- a tool positioned on a distal end of the instrument shaft;

- a handle;

- a coupling element securing the handle on the instrument shaft so that the handle can be moved by at least three degrees of freedom with respect to the instrument shaft;

- wherein a distal end of the handle is configured as a tensioning device to receive the coupling element;

wherein a pressure force can be exerted on the coupling element by the tensioning device in such a way that the coupling element at least partially surrounds the instrument shaft while clamping said instrument shaft; and

wherein the coupling element is configured as an essentially spherical component equipped with a penetration bore hole for the instrument shaft and the tensioning device of the handle is configured as a bearing for rotatable storage of the coupling element.